



# Hector De La Torre

Assembly Member 50<sup>th</sup> District

## News Release

**For Immediate Release**

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### **De La Torre Introduces Bill to Support Foster Youth with Basic Personal Documents in their Transition to Independent Living**

**Sacramento, Calif.** – Assemblymember Hector De La Torre (D-South Gate) introduced Assembly Bill 270 to assure that foster care children are given essential identification documents before their release from the foster care system. These documents include a birth certificate, a Social Security card, a California identification card, and Select Service registration along with other vital documents.

Currently, courts have the discretion to terminate jurisdiction over a foster child without providing them vital identification documents. Without proper documentation, foster youth are left completely unidentifiable, making them more vulnerable and unable to secure employment.

“AB 270 will strengthen the court’s role to ensure counties are providing all required documentation to foster youth prior to the court’s termination of jurisdiction,” said Assemblymember De La Torre. “This bill will create a statewide collaboration that will remove uncertainty for foster youth and assist them in transitioning to adulthood.”

According to the California Department of Social Services, over 4,255 state children emancipate or “age out” of the foster care system each year. Approximately 50 percent of emancipated youth become homeless within six months in Los Angeles and Alameda counties, according to Covenant House California, a privately-funded agency serving homeless youth.

Foster youth who do not receive vital identification documents prior to emancipation are caught in a bureaucratic web that can be intimidating for a young adult to face alone. Securing essential documents such as an immunization record, birth certificate and Social Security card can be difficult enough for the average adult. Foster youth often lack the skills or knowledge to track down the necessary documentation that will allow them to enroll in school, apply for jobs, receive medical services, or access the additional resources available to them.

According to the Casey Family Program, a national child welfare foundation, approximately 1/3 of youth who age out of foster care will end up on public assistance, face homelessness or end up in low-wage, unsteady jobs.

#### **Background:**

In 2007, Assembly Bill 2310 clarified that certain vital identification documents are to be given to all youth aging out of the foster care system. However, it did not fully establish the court’s role in verifying that counties are providing these vital documents. Assembly Bill 270 will ensure statewide collaboration between the counties, the court system and the state to help foster youth with the basic building blocks needed to transition into society as productive adults.